

Motivation

Ayelet Fishbach, University of Chicago

Priming effects

- ▶ In 1957 James Vicary, a private market researcher, increased the sales of Coca Cola and popcorn in a movie by subliminally presenting the messages “Drink Coca Cola” and “Eat Popcorn.” More recent research (Karremans et al., 2006) replicates these effects for thirsty and hungry moviegoers
- ▶ North et al (1997) studied the effect of background music on choice of wine in a local supermarket. French music led to outselling French wine over German wine whereas German music led to outselling German wine over French
- ▶ Johnson found that when an online car dealership used a red (flame-like) background, shoppers chose safer cars; but when the background was green (dollar-bill) they were more likely to choose cheap cars

Goals constitute the focal points around which human behavior is organized

- ▶ **What is a goal?** A working definition
- ▶ **Activation of a goal**
- ▶ **The operation of a goal**
- ▶ **The interaction among multiple goals**



What is a goal?

- ▶ **Definition:**
 - ▶ A cognitive representation of a desired end-point that impacts evaluations, emotions and behaviors (Fishbach & Ferguson, 2007)
- ▶ **The structure of goals:**
 - ▶ A goal **fluctuates in accessibility** (Higgins, 1996)
 - ▶ There are **multiple memories** underlying any given goal (means of attainment, opportunities) e.g., the memories underlying the goal of riding a bike
 - ▶ The memories of a goal become activated according to **knowledge activation** processes (e.g., Anderson & Reder, 1999)
- ▶ **The content of goals:**
 - ▶ **Ends and means** (behaviors, plans, objects)
 - ▶ **Valence**
e.g., just because someone possesses knowledge about how to ride a bike, does not mean that that knowledge constitutes a goal



Activation of a Goal

- ▶ **Goals become activated (consciously or not) according to knowledge activation principles**
 - ▶ **Stimuli that trigger goal activation:**
 - ▶ **end-states and means** (e.g., scrambled sentences; Chartrand and Bargh, 1996)
 - ▶ **relationship partners** who expect the person to pursue the goal as well as the representation of individuals who pursue that goal themselves (e.g., Shah, 2003; Fitzsimons & Bargh, 2003)
 - ▶ **group members**, who activate the goals that the perceiver tends to pursue when in the presence of those group members (Cesario, Plaks, & Higgins, 2006)
 - ▶ **The effect of activated goal on behavior conforms to the principle of applicability**
-



Operation of a Goal

- ▶ **knowledge accessibility**
The **New Look** research: What people want, need, and desire influences how they see the world around them (Bruner, 1957)
e.g., thirsty participants show greater accessibility of drinking-related words (Aarts et al., 2001);
People see "B" versus "13" according to their motivation (Balcetis & Dunning, 2006)
 - ▶ **Evaluation**
Positive evaluations of stimuli that facilitate the goal and negative evaluations of stimuli that thwart the goal (Ferguson & Bargh, 2004; Markman & Brendl, 2000)
 - ▶ **Moods and emotions**
Emotions during goal pursuit (Fishbach, et al., 2004), and after the termination of a goal pursuit (Higgins et al., 1997)
 - ▶ **Behavior**
Even nonconsciously activated goals influence behavior
e.g., achievement, cooperation, and shopping (e.g., North, Hargreaves, & McKendrick, 1997)
-



On the Interaction Among Goals

- ▶ In a typical and richly complex social environment, in which there exist multiple cues for different goals, the co-activation of simultaneous goals is inevitable

- ▶ Multiple goals of similar centrality:

A. Goal competition - because resources are limited, the pursuit of a given goal pulls resources away from another goal
(goal shielding, Shah et al., 2002; post-fulfillment inhibition, Forster et al., 2005; ego depletion, Baumeister et al., 1994)

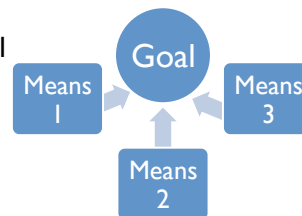
B. Multiple goal attainment – given the presence of several salient goals and limited motivational resources, individuals search for means that serve several goals simultaneously (Kruglanski et al., 2002)

Because these means are scarce, the result is choice deferral and decision aversion (Dhar, 1997; Iyengar & Lepper, 2000; Tversky & Shafir, 1992)

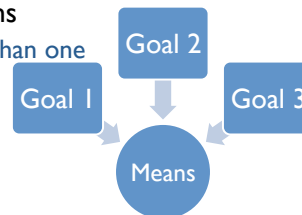


Goal systems theory

- ▶ Use semantic network to model motivation
- ▶ Multiple means are connected to a single goal
 - ▶ **Equifinality** – multiple means of achieving the same goal (e.g., getting to work by taxi, bus, or bike)

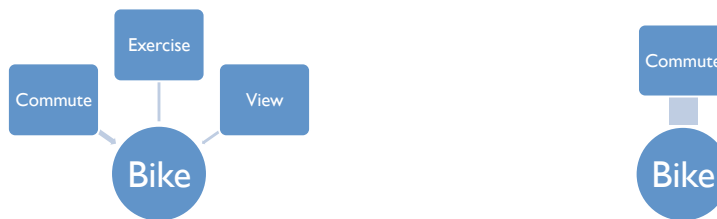


- ▶ Multiple goals are connected to a single means
 - ▶ **Multifinality** – the same means serve more than one goal (e.g., riding a bike for transportation, exercise, and entertainment)



The dilution effect

- ▶ An increase in the number of goals leads to a decrease in the strength of the goal-means association, which decreases the perceived instrumentality of the means for the original goal
- ▶ A preference for one (vs. two) bird with one stone



Laser pen

- ▶ Ps receive a laser pen and either complete a survey (one-goal condition) or complete a survey and test the laser pointer function (two-goal condition)



- ▶ DV: Ps choose between two pens: one with a laser function and one without it, to write their name on the payment log form
- ▶ Results: In the control condition, 54.8% (about half) chose the laser pen. In the experimental condition, where people tested the laser function, only 16.6% chose the laser pen.



The dilution effect

- ▶ Need to distinguish between preference and perceived effectiveness
 - ▶ In general, people prefer multifinal means
 - ▶ But multifinal means are seen as less effective for each goal. People do not choose them when only one goal is activated
 - ▶ Dilution effects influence choice when people choose based on association strength
 - ▶ Rent (unifinal) vs. buy (multifinal)
-



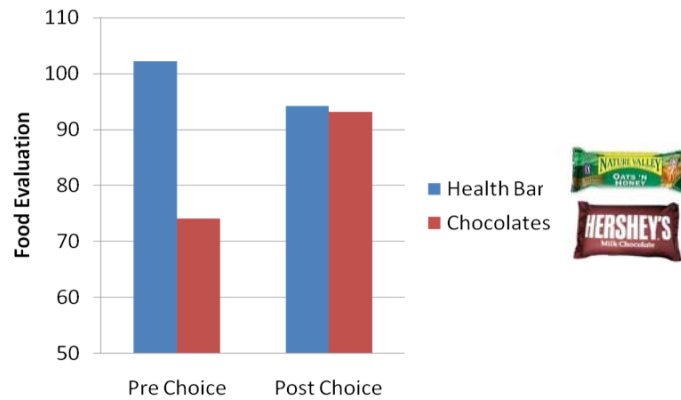
On the Interaction Among Goals

- ▶ **Multiple goals of different centrality:**
 - ▶ **Self-control conflicts:** When the attainment of central, higher-order goals comes at the expense of foregoing low-order desires or temptations
 - ▶ Self control operations influence behavior, evaluation and emotion
 - ▶ A process of asymmetric response
-



A reverse spreading of alternatives

Health conscious participants evaluate health and chocolate bars prior to versus after choosing the health bars

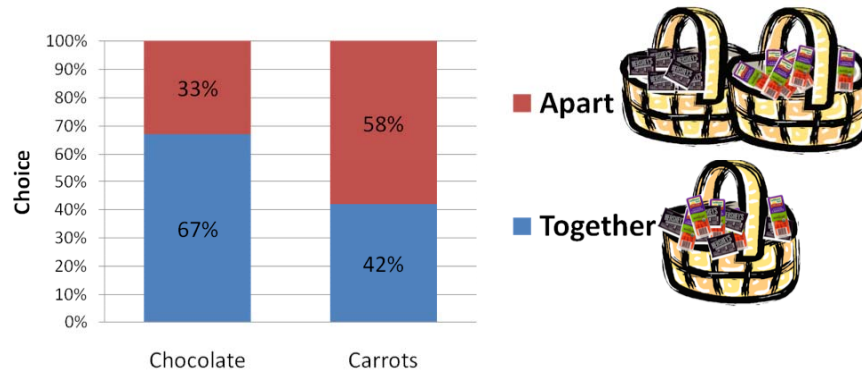


On the Interaction Among Goals

- ▶ **Multiple goals in a choice sequence:**
Goals frequently require taking several actions that maintain goal pursuit over time
- ▶ **Two dynamics of self-regulation** (Fishbach & Dhar, 2005; Fishbach, et al., 2006)
- ▶ **Highlighting:** Pursuing one goal enhances the commitment to this particular goal and motivates complementary actions
When an initial action indicates a strong **commitment** to a goal
- ▶ **Balancing:** Pursuing one goal liberates the individual to pursue other, conflicting goals
When an initial action indicates fast **progress** toward a goal



Carrots or chocolates



Summary

▶ Different levels of analysis

- A single goal
- Multiple goals
- Multiple goals of different centrality (self-control conflicts)
- Multiple goals and multiple choices

▶ Different effects of goals

- Knowledge activation
- Evaluations
- Mood and emotions
- Behaviors